



GRADE 12  
DIPLOMA EXAMINATION

English 33

Part A: Written Response

June 1990

**Alberta**  
EDUCATION

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**GRADE 12 DIPLOMA EXAMINATION  
ENGLISH 33**

**Part A: Written Response**

**GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS**

This examination consists of THREE sections. Read the **WHOLE** examination before you begin to write. Complete **ALL** sections.

Total time: 2½ hours

Budget your time carefully.

The three sections of the examination are as follows:

Page Number

Section I: Personal Response to Literature  
Suggested time: 75 minutes  
Value: 50% of this examination

2

Section II: Functional Writing  
Suggested time: 45 minutes  
Value: 30% of this examination

13

Section III: Response to Visual Communication  
Suggested time: 30 minutes  
Value: 20% of this examination

22

You may use a nonelectronic English language dictionary and a thesaurus, but no other reference materials.

Space is provided for Planning and Drafting and for Revised Work.

Please write your revised work in blue or black ink.

**DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ANYWHERE  
IN THIS BOOKLET.**

**JUNE 1990**

**SECTION I: PERSONAL RESPONSE TO LITERATURE**  
(Suggested time: 75 minutes)

Read the excerpt from *Cat's Eye* and complete the assignment that follows.

**from CAT'S EYE**

*This selection from Cat's Eye by Canadian author Margaret Atwood is told from the perspective of a young girl growing up in Ontario in the 1940s.*

Boys pride themselves on their drab clothing, their drooping socks, their smeared and inky skin: dirt, for them, is almost as good as wounds. They work at acting like boys. They call each other by their last names, draw attention to any extra departures from cleanliness. "Hey, Robertson! Wipe off the snot!" "Who farted?" They punch one another on the arm, saying, "Got you!" "Got you back!" There always seem to be more of them in the room than there actually are.

My brother punches arms and makes remarks about smells like the rest of them, but he has a secret. He would never tell it to these other boys, because of the way they would laugh.

The secret is that he has a girlfriend. This girlfriend is so secret she doesn't even know about it herself. I'm the only one he's told, and I have been double-sworn not to tell anyone else. Even when we're alone I'm not allowed to refer to her by her name, only by her initials, which are B.W. My brother will sometimes murmur these initials when there are other people around, my parents for instance. When he says them he stares at me, waiting for me to nod or give some sign that I have heard and understood. He writes me notes in code, which he leaves where I'll find them, under my pillow, tucked into my top bureau drawer. When I translate these notes they turn out to be so unlike him, so lacking in invention, so moronic in fact, that I can hardly believe it: "Talked to B.W." "Saw HER today." He writes these notes in colored pencil, different colors, with exclamation marks. One night there's a freak early snowfall, and in the morning when I wake up and look out of my bedroom window there are the supercharged initials, etched in pee on the white ground, already melting.

I can see that this girlfriend is causing him some anguish, as well as excitement, but I can't understand why. I know who she is. Her real name is Bertha Watson. She hangs around with the older girls, up on the hill under the stunted fir trees. She has straight brown hair with bangs and she's of ordinary size. There's no magic about her that I can see, or any abnormality. I'd like to know how she's done it, this trick with my brother that's turned him into a stupider, more nervous identical twin of himself.

Knowing this secret, being the only one chosen to know, makes me feel important in a way. But it's a negative importance, it's the importance of a blank sheet of paper. I can know because I don't count. I feel singled out, but also bereft. Also protective of him, because for the first time in my life I feel responsible for him. He is at risk, and I have power over him. It occurs to me that I could tell on him, lay him open to derision; I have that choice. He is at my mercy and I don't want it. I want him back the way he was, unchanged, invincible.

The girlfriend doesn't last long. After a while nothing more is heard of her. My brother makes fun of me again, or ignores me; he's back in charge. He gets a chemistry set and does experiments down in the basement. As an obsession I prefer the chemistry set to the girlfriend. There are things stewing, horrible stinks, little sulfurous explosions,

*Continued*

amazing illusions. There's invisible writing that comes out when you hold the paper over a candle. You can make a hard-boiled egg rubbery so it will go into a milk bottle, although getting it out again is more difficult. *Turn Water to Blood*, the instructions say, *and Astound Your Friends*.

He still trades comic books, but effortlessly, absentmindedly. Because he cares less about them he makes better trades. The comic books pile up under his bed, stacks and stacks of them, but he seldom reads them any more when the other boys aren't around.

My brother exhausts the chemistry set. Now he has a star map, pinned to the wall of his room, and at night he turns out the lights and sits beside the darkened, open window, in the cold, with his maroon sweater pulled on over his pajamas, gazing skyward. He has a pair of my father's binoculars, which he's allowed to use as long as he keeps the strap around his neck so he won't drop them. What he really wants next is a telescope.

When he allows me to join him, and when he feels like talking, he teaches me new names, charts the reference points: Orion, the Bear, the Dragon, the Swan. These are constellations. Every one of them is made up of a huge number of stars, hundreds of times bigger and hotter than our own sun. These stars are light-years away, he says. We aren't really seeing them at all, we're just seeing the light they sent out years, hundreds of years, thousands of years ago. The stars are like echoes. I sit there in my flannelette pajamas, shivering, the back of my neck hurting from the upward tilt, squinting into the cold and the infinitely receding darkness, into the black caldron where the fiery stars boil and boil. His stars are different: they're wordless, they flame in an obliterating silence. I feel as if my body is dissolving and I am being drawn up and up, like thinning mist, into a vast emptying space.

"Arcturus," my brother says. It's a foreign word, one I don't know, but I know the tone of his voice: recognition, completion, something added to a set. I think of his jars of marbles in the spring, the way he dropped the marbles into the jar, one by one, counting. My brother is collecting again; he's collecting stars.

Margaret Atwood

## THE ASSIGNMENT

The narrator in the excerpt from *Cat's Eye* observes that her brother's interests affect the way he behaves.

### WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF BOYS' AND GIRLS' BEHAVIOR AS DESCRIBED BY THE NARRATOR?

In your writing you should

- consider the narrator's reaction to changes in her brother's behavior
- use your own experiences and/or observations of the behavior of boys and girls to support your opinion.

You may also refer to other literature you have studied.

Present your ideas in PROSE.

**Section I: Personal Response to Literature**

**PLANNING AND DRAFTING**

There is additional space for Planning and Drafting on pages 6, 8, and 10.

## Section I: Personal Response to Literature

## REVISED WORK

There is additional space for Revised Work on pages 7, 9, and 11.

**Section I: Personal Response to Literature**

**PLANNING AND DRAFTING**

There is additional space for Planning and Drafting on pages 8 and 10.

## **Section I: Personal Response to Literature**

## REVISED WORK

There is additional space for Revised Work on pages 9 and 11.

**Section I: Personal Response to Literature**

**PLANNING AND DRAFTING**

There is additional space for Planning and Drafting on page 10.

## Section I: Personal Response to Literature

## REVISED WORK

There is additional space for Revised Work on page 11.

**Section I: Personal Response to Literature**

**PLANNING AND DRAFTING**

## Section I: Personal Response to Literature

## REVISED WORK

**GO ON TO SECTION II**

## **SECTION II: FUNCTIONAL WRITING**

**(Suggested time: 45 minutes)**

Read the situation described below and complete the assignment that follows.

### **THE SITUATION**

You videotaped your best friend's wedding as part of your wedding present. You agreed to send the completed tape to your friend's new home address in Winnipeg. When you saw an advertisement for the Mercury Courier Service in the *Nalwen News*, you decided that using this courier service would be the fastest, safest way to send the tape.

You delivered the tape to the courier service on a Tuesday and by the following Saturday the tape had not arrived at its destination. On the following Monday, you telephoned the courier service office and spoke to Joe, who said that he would check to see if your package could be traced and would call you back. By Wednesday, you still had not heard from Joe at the courier service, so you called the office again. You spoke to Sandra because Joe is not in the office on Wednesdays. Sandra could find no evidence that Joe had begun to trace your parcel. She said she would look into the matter and call you back.

You are now very worried. You want someone in authority at the Mercury Courier Service to make sure that your package containing the videotape is found and that it is delivered to your friend.

### **THE ASSIGNMENT**

**In the space provided, write a letter to the manager of Mercury Courier Service requesting a solution to this problem.**

In your letter BE SURE to

- make clear exactly what the problem is
- make clear what the manager of Mercury Courier Service can do to satisfy you
- use an appropriate tone

PLEASE NOTE: Letter format has been provided beginning on page 15.

Sign your letter PAT JONES.

*Continued*

## **Section II: Functional Writing**

### **PLANNING AND DRAFTING**

There is additional space for Planning and Drafting on pages 16 and 18.

## Section II: Functional Writing

## REVISED WORK

492 Nalwood Drive  
Nalwen, Alberta  
T5J 2R8

June 13, 1990

Manager  
Mercury Courier Service  
63 Crescent Place  
Nalwen, Alberta  
T5J 2T4

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

There is additional space for Revised Work on pages 17 and 19.

## **Section II: Functional Writing**

### **PLANNING AND DRAFTING**

There is additional space for Planning and Drafting on page 18.

## Section II: Functional Writing

## REVISED WORK

There is additional space for Revised Work on page 19.

## Section II: Functional Writing

### **PLANNING AND DRAFTING**

## Section II: Functional Writing

## REVISED WORK



**GO ON TO SECTION III**

### SECTION III: RESPONSE TO VISUAL COMMUNICATION



Office workers in Park Forest, Illinois, after getting off the 4:51 p.m. commuter train from Chicago (1950s).

*Continued*

**SECTION III: RESPONSE TO VISUAL COMMUNICATION**  
**(Suggested time: 30 minutes)**

Examine the photograph on page 22 and complete the assignment below.

**THE ASSIGNMENT**

**What idea(s) does the photographer communicate with this photograph? Explain how the details in the photograph and the photographer's techniques reinforce the idea(s).**

**PLANNING AND DRAFTING**

There is additional space for Planning and Drafting on pages 24 and 26.

### **Section III: Response to Visual Communication**

#### **PLANNING AND DRAFTING**

There is additional space for Planning and Drafting on page 26.

### Section III: Response to Visual Communication

## REVISED WORK

There is additional space for Revised Work on page 27.

### **Section III: Response to Visual Communication**

#### **PLANNING AND DRAFTING**

### **Section III: Response to Visual Communication**

## REVISED WORK

## CREDITS

From *Cat's Eye* by Margaret Atwood. Used by permission of the Canadian Publishers, McClelland and Stewart, Toronto.

Photograph by Dan Weiner, courtesy of Sandra Weiner.



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M2

M3

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ENGLISH 33: PART A

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ENGLISH 33: PART A